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COLD WAR ROLE FOR JOURNALISTS

This speech was given at the Syracuse University School of Journalism on December 16, 1960 by Earl F. English, dean of the School of Journalism, University of Missouri.

Dr. English proposes here that "junior envoys of communication" (journalism school graduates) be sent abroad by the U.S. government to work and study in their specialized fields in lieu of compulsory military service.

It is a pleasure indeed to be invited again to visit the School of Journalism here at Syracuse University. My first occasion to get acquainted with your school was as a member of the first journalism accrediting team, about 14 years ago. Then you were housed in a very distinctive building, "the castle," I believe it was called.

Syracuse University and the institution I have the honor to represent, the University of Missouri, have much in common, and I do not refer to the efforts of our football teams to achieve top national recognition. These two institutions have been for many years, Missouri since 1908 and Syracuse since 1934, thoroughly identified with professional education for journalism. By that I mean our universities have set up independent divisions under administrators reporting directly to the presidents of these institutions. Substantial sums of money are spent annually to pay top-ranking faculties and to furnish required services and supplies. This practice, I am sorry to say, is far from representative of what is labeled journalism education in many colleges and universities in the United States.

Syracuse and Missouri universities have maintained their deep convictions on the soundness of journalism education through difficult times. It is just reward, I feel, that the efforts of this institution to assume leadership in this field have been recognized recently by the Samuel Newhouse Foundation with truly magnificent financial support.

While this grant from the Newhouse Foundation properly recognizes this division's contributions in the past, it also provides the opportunity, if not necessitates the requirement, for a thorough evaluation of the direction education for journalism should take during the years immediately ahead.

Lack of Understanding Cited

What I have to say is, I think, directly related to the decisions that must be made as this institution assumes the *responsibility* which underlies the confidence that has been placed in it.

With facilities such as will become more and more available here, the quest for greater insight into the theoretical and practical aspects of communications between individuals must be advanced without delay. Evidence continues to mount that in spite of great scientific and technological achievements, we run the great risk of falling victim to our failures to understand not only each other, but the intent and purposes of the organizations we have designed to represent us.

On the international scene, with the added factor of differences in languages together with the unenumerated false assumptions we nurture in regard to foreign tongues and their translatability, the problem has come to contribute to an actual threat to our way of life.

I believe that a school of journalism today must, within its resources and recognizing its responsibility to its state and region, direct much of its attention to the advancement of journalism in other countries. At Missouri and at Syracuse, and I am sure at other schools of journalism, letters arrive nearly every day from foreign students and journalists asking for the privilege of studying in our journalism institutions. Most of these requests require almost complete financial aid. Nearly all of them must be denied.

Journalism Behind the Iron Curtain

A group of editors representing the National Editorial Association in September visited the Journalism Club in Prague, Czechoslovakia. One of the group, Holt McPherson, editor of the High Point (N.C.) *Enterprise*, told me that he was shocked to hear the secretary of the International Organization of Journalists, Jeri Meisner, express the opinion that the three finest schools of journalism today are behind the iron curtain.

While we here today might want to take issue with Mr. Meisner on that statement, it is known that in the U.S.S.R. special journalism training is compulsory. It is also known that this training takes place under the rules laid down by *Agit-Prop*. According to Leon Rollin, writing in the January-May 1959 issue of *IFJ Information*, at the Faculty of Journalism of Moscow University alone, there are 2,000 registered students.

As U.S.S.R. increases the opportunity for foreign students to study that kind of journalism, the denials of admission of foreign students we are required to make for want of funds represent, in my opinion, a great squandering of potential loyalty to future democratic ideals and press freedom.

But while the need for foreign students to study here is very important, the proposal I am making today is almost reversed.

'Peace Corps' of Journalists Proposed

It is to instigate a plan whereby our own students may *study* and *practice* journalism outside the United States.

During the presidential campaign this fall, some consideration was given to a plan for better utilizing the education and specialized training possessed by certain young men during their two-year period of selective military service for their country. I hope that the forthcoming administration pursues this proposal to the extent that the great and varied potential of our college graduates entering military service may be channeled into areas which not only will exploit their immediate specialized training, but which will give them opportunities to develop their knowledge and abilities to the fullest extent. A graduate with specialized training in a field of science, for example, undoubtedly will have much to offer under this plan.

I recently examined the employment records of the University of Missouri journalism graduates for 1959. Of the 114 *male* graduates who received degrees in journalism, 22, or approximately 20 per cent, were in the military service of their country. In almost all cases, their principal activities during this period of service were of a non-journalistic nature.

Today I should like to propose a plan for maximum utilization by our government of the education and training of these journalism graduates during military service.

I should like to propose that qualified graduates of schools of journalism and all others who may be eligible spend their service as employees of newspapers and radio stations in countries outside the United States.

I should like to set forth some reasons why it seems to me a greater service could be rendered to the United States under such a plan than by traditional military training, important as this may be.

First, let me say that under this plan our young journalism graduates would first be invited by the newspapers and radio stations to serve internships in the countries where we still have friendly relations. As interns they would work on any kind of job or activity to which they were assigned by their employers.

Two years ago, I had the experience of helping to organize a World Press Congress in the University of Missouri. To this conference came editors and publishers and broadcasters from 35 countries of the free world. Each was accompanied by a host editor, publisher, or broadcaster from the United States.

Many generalizations could be made as a result of observing these three full days and evenings of questions, discussion, and argument. Representatives of countries barely on speaking terms entered into discussions pertaining to each other's problems. In this short period, friendships between delegates were established that have had important developments since that time.

One of the benefits of this Press Congress was certainly not clearly anticipated by those who designed it. It was the remarkable and almost immediate bond of understanding and good will that developed between our students and the editors and broadcasters from foreign lands.

Our students had proposed that each delegate and his American host be the guests of a sorority, fraternity, or

organized dormitory for an evening meal. We agreed to the project with some hesitation. What happened on that evening was very little different from the routine activities of these organizations, I am told. But both during and after the Congress, I learned over and over again, both from editorials in newspapers in many parts of the world and from the delegates themselves, that the university students had developed in our visitors a new and highly commendable attitude toward the United States.

One delegate was so amazed, so deeply impressed by what he saw in his brief look at student life in an American university, that he believed it had all been staged as an elaborate public relations program in order to make a favorable impression on foreign editors. Unannounced, he actually returned to the fraternity house the following evening. Later he told me of his suspicions and how he discovered his second welcome no less cordial, the students' interest in him and his country no less sincere. In fact, he said he was asked questions about his country which showed a surprising understanding of its history and current problems. He said he would check into the answers to some of their questions as soon as he returned home.

Fighters Needed for Ideological Struggle

I believe the time has come to call on a few of these resourceful and engaging graduates of our colleges and universities to lend a hand in some of the foreign countries of the world where individuals must definitely cast their lots with one of at least two totally different ways of looking at life and its meanings.

It isn't easy for most of us, for example, to understand how a friendly neighboring nation like Cuba can suddenly develop an image of us as a greedy capitalistic monster seeking to destroy.

As journalists, you are very much aware of the part the press and broadcasting facilities play in making truthful representations to the public. But publications everywhere need the basic ideals and working principles of a journalism such as ours in order to maintain the courage to face up to the fight. Journalism as we attempt to practice it has its wellspring in the never completely satisfied desire to tell a story honestly and faithfully within the limits of our senses to observe and reconstruct it in language. This characterization of our profession put into practice is increasingly unacceptable in many parts of the world. The last of the Havana editors to yield to the suppression of objective reporting in Cuba and leave for the United States was a Missouri-trained editor, Milt Guss, of the *Times of Havana*.

I should like to raise the question here today: Who really knows the true professional potential of the top young men and women who are approaching graduation in a school of journalism such as this?

'Bridge' to China

One of the cases I should like to cite of the work of journalism graduates in a foreign country occurred many years ago in China, when Walter Williams was dean at Missouri. In 1910, B. W. Fleisher and Thomas F. Millard founded the *China Press* in Shanghai. Millard wrote in the *New York Herald Tribune* on March 29, 1928 (18

years later), that he had first hired Carl Crow, a Missouri journalism graduate, as a nucleus of a news colony, and

This started a chain which during the last 18 years has brought about 25 students of the Missouri School of Journalism to China and Japan. From this end we have sent a score or so young Chinese and a few Japanese to study journalism at Columbia, Missouri. In time the Americans, when their contracts expired, either went home, where a number of them now are working on foreign news desks of home papers, or came back to the Far East as correspondents for American publications. In time these Chinese and Japanese students returned to their native countries and engaged in journalism out here.

I will not take the time to develop a full story of this wonderful two-way bridge which was established back there by Fleisher and Millard and their *China Press*. Many men and women profited by this relationship which I think is closely related to what I am advocating here today. Neither have I time to list the many prominent journalists who were identified with this project. Hollington Tong, recently Free China's ambassador to the United States, got an education in journalism at Missouri and Columbia universities. F. M. Flynn, president and publisher of the *New York Daily News*, took his first employment on the *Japan Advertiser* in Tokyo, a paper which Fleisher established later to continue the same working relationship with Missouri journalism graduates.

Foreign Service Qualifications of a Journalist

Specifically, what does a young man have to offer his country in the way of foreign service at the time of his graduation from a professional school of journalism? He has a good general education, including at least a reading knowledge of one foreign language. In some cases, he even will have a better than fair writing and speaking foreign language ability, and I believe that under the incentive of an internship program a much higher level of attainment would result within the same period of time now expended in language study.

The journalism graduate today has the ability to utilize our traditional journalistic forms: news, features, editorials, and headlines, with some success. What is equally important, he understands some of the reasons underlying the practice of adhering to these patterns of journalistic organization.

Of greatest importance, however, it seems to me, is his awareness of the need for objectivity in news presentation. In some countries of the world, the practice of an objective presentation of the events of the day has all but disappeared in the interest of shaping the news to fit a pattern of political expediency. Last week a major riot occurred in Korea, with the immediate cause purported to be the retouching of a news photo.

I am reminded of a foreign graduate student who spent several extra semesters attempting to write a thesis that would present in a scientifically acceptable way the several sides of an issue without disclosing his intense partisanship for one particular point of view. This is a difficult lesson to learn if you have never known any other way.

One can take a clue of what a journalism intern has in his basic education that would be of great value to media in foreign lands from the interest shown by foreign journalists who travel and study in the United States. These visitors are interested in the production aspect of newspapers in all respects, from typesetting through to the press and delivery methods. They are interested in broadcasting equipment and in programming methods.

Howard Taylor of the James Copley group of newspapers has recently traveled to the Philippine Islands and to El Salvador to help improve the typography of certain daily newspapers. While young journalism graduates cannot conceivably approach the typographical ability of Howard Taylor to improve the readability and general appearance of publications, students who have studied here under your distinguished typographers, Laurance Siegfried and Ed Arnold, could do much to enhance the typographic quality of many foreign newspapers and magazines.

In attempting to generalize on the knowledge that a journalism graduate possesses and could use to great advantage as an intern on a foreign publication or broadcasting station, I should not overlook the graduate who has devoted his interest to the advertising side of media. Probably no greater assistance could be offered to our still friendly foreign media than in the field of advertising. Many of our modern concepts of advertising as a stimulator of business activity have still to be taught and practiced in foreign lands. Anything we can do to assist in the economic advancement of press and broadcasting in free and friendly countries will proportionately strengthen these media in their struggle against insidious political pressures.

Those of you who have learned your advertising and marketing lessons well can contribute greatly to the economic well-being of foreign newspapers and broadcasting stations in countless ways. Some of you are fully capable of using your advertising and marketing knowledge and techniques to tell the story of a particular foreign newspaper's position as an advertising medium in its community. You can research the area's potential as a market and present its case in the best Madison Avenue technique to the national and international advertising agencies of the United States.

Because of the particular emphasis on one phase of their education, no group of college graduates is, in my opinion, better qualified to tell the story of our historic struggle to achieve and maintain our basic liberties in foreign lands than the graduates of our professional schools of journalism. No group is better informed, it seems to me, on the nature of our constitutional guarantees, or has greater appreciation of the importance of the people's right to know the truth at all times than those who have learned their journalism lessons well.

'Translators of the Language of Liberty'

To what extent the knowledge and capabilities of journalism-trained interns might be utilized, only experience will reveal. Today we find the representatives of the United States traveling and working in many parts of the world in a rising climate of suspicion. It is my conviction, as a result of many years of working with journalism students under constantly challenging conditions, that

these on-the-scene translators of the language of liberty will find ways to serve their foreign employers far more ingeniously and effectively than by any possibilities I might suggest here as examples.

Certainly the United States already is providing technical services of many kinds to foreign countries. We frequently hear of the technical experts the Russians are providing. Our student and faculty exchanges and our missionary groups are contributing effectively toward common ends, as you well know from first-hand experience. Your former Dean Lyle Spencer and Prof. Roland Wolseley, among others on your staff, I am sure, have carried the principles of our journalism practices to Egypt and India.

Foreign service journalists should be given at least a trial on publications willing to accept them. While they can hardly stand as "technical assistants," we may find them in many cases serving informal roles of "junior consultants."

Many questions come to mind in putting into practice a plan such as this. Certainly journalism should be included under the same basic considerations that will apply to graduates in other disciplines who have special training to offer.

I am advocating here that if the specialized abilities of journalism-trained graduates of professional schools are thus utilized in the service of foreign publications, these graduates shall be considered as having discharged their military service obligations fully, even as scientists are able to discharge those military requirements in similar fashion. I am also suggesting that this program, like the military training, be engaged in at government expense.

Government Should Support Program

It seems to me that such a program as I am suggesting should be supervised by the United States Department of State. It will be necessary for the department to verify the complete willingness of foreign media to accept the journalism interns assigned to them for a specified period of service.

I believe that in some cases the existing cooperating journalism organizations, such as the Inter-American Press Association, should develop the offers for intern sponsorship outside of governmental channels. The Department of State, however, would service the project, beginning with the selection of qualified candidates by means of examinations. The department should, of course, conduct a school in the interest of preparing the interns to live and work harmoniously and effectively in their new communities. From time to time, an agency of the

department should verify that each intern is performing the duties assigned to him by his employer to the best of his ability.

So far you may note I have placed most of the emphasis for this proposal on the benefits which I believe would accrue to the foreign media and ultimately to the United States in general.

In closing, may I point out some of the advantages I believe would be afforded the graduate himself by this experience.

Benefits of Program

In the first place, his entire four to five years of learning in college would be vitalized by the goal he could set for himself as a professional representative of his country in a foreign land. Foreign language, foreign history, even his journalism courses themselves, would take on new and increased dimensions as the challenge to be a worthy representative of his country became closer to realization. In effect he might point for foreign service journalism as a career from the beginning in charting his course of study.

It seems to me that foreign graduate students now in our universities would be happy to contribute to this program by providing our prospective foreign interns with important background information on their respective countries. It is quite likely that certain schools or departments of journalism might tend to concentrate on training for particular countries, or for particular areas of the world, depending on specialized training that might be available, such as foreign language study.

In summary, from the student's point of view, there is nothing about this program that will require him to proselyte his training in any way. In contrast with other foreign journalistic apparatuses, there is no need for any propaganda effort. All that is expected of him is to practice his journalism in the manner in which he has been trained. He has no hidden motives other than those of helping his fellow professionals toward the common ends of serving freedom and the truth.

When he returns home to serve in his chosen area of journalism, he will bring back with him the understanding of the people in at least one country of the world.

All of us who will be privileged to be on the receiving end of his communication efforts here will benefit from his broader judgment and understanding of those people.

I hope that this School of Journalism and all others of professional standing will give their interest and support toward the day when the United States can send forth these junior envoys of communication.

*Columbia, Missouri
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